

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 4766

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM PGOV PEPR NL UR
SUBJECT: DUTCH FREEZE BEGINS TO LOOK LIKE A THAW

REF: THE HAGUE 4616

1. AT A PRESS CONFERENCE AFTER THE CABINET MEETING
AUGUST 25, PRIME MINISTER VAN AGT SAID THE CABINET HAD
CONCLUDED ITS SURVEY OF DUTCH/SOVIET RELATIONS AND HAD
DECIDED THAT "FOR THE TIME BEING THERE ARE NO ACTIVITIES
WHICH ARE SUITABLE FOR SUSPENSION." IN REPLY TO A QUESTION,
HE SAID CONSULTATIONS ARE STILL BEING CARRIED ON WITH THE
EUROPEAN COMMUNITY PARTNERS AND MAINTAINED THAT SOME BI-
LATERAL ACTIVITIES MIGHT STILL BE SUSPENDED AS A RESULT
OF THOSE DISCUSSIONS. TO ANOTHER QUESTIONER, WHO HAD ASKED
WHETHER IT MIGHT NOT HAVE BEEN DESIREABLE TO AWAIT THE
RESULTS OF THE EC CONSULTATIONS BEFORE TAKING ACTION,
THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT EXPRESSIONS OF SPONTANEOUS
INDIGNATION COULD ALSO BE OF SIGNIFICANCE. HE NOTED
THAT ONE ACTIVITY CONSIDERED IN THE SURVEY WAS THE VISIT
OF THE SOVIET MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE TO THE NETHERLANDS,
TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED FOR NEXT MONTH. THIS INVITATION
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HAD NOT BEEN WITHDRAWN; AMONG OTHER THINGS, HE SAID,
THE DUTCH MIGHT WISH TO TALK TO THE MINISTER ABOUT THE
HELSINKI DECLARATION.

2. AN MFA SOURCE (LECLERC - ACTING HEAD OF THE EASTERN
EUROPEAN SECTION) TOLD US THE "SURVEY" WAS CONDUCTED BY
THE DIFFERENT MINISTRIES AND WAS PRESENTED AT FRIDAY'S

CABINET MEETING BY EACH MINISTER. THE DECISION HAD, THEREFORE, BEEN WORKED OUT AT THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL AND MUST BE SEEN AS A DECISION BY THE CABINET ITSELF. REGARDING THE VISIT OF THE SOVIET MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, LECLERC SAID THE INVITATION IS A LONG STANDING ONE AND THAT THE VISIT HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN SCHEDULED BUT HAD BEEN POSTPONED. THE DUTCH HAVE NOW PROPOSED NEXT MONTH, BUT A FIRM REPLY HAS NOT YET BEEN RECEIVED.

3. COMMENT: VAN AGT'S STATEMENT WOULD THUS APPEAR TO MEAN THAT THE DUTCH HAVE NOW BACKED AWAY FROM THEIR JULY DECISION TO "FREEZE" RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION. THE CABINET APPEARS CLEARLY TO HAVE UNDERSTOOD THE SIGNALS FROM WITHIN THE NETHERLANDS AND FROM THE COMMUNITY PARTNERS THAT ITS EARLIER REACTION HAD BEEN TOO STRONG.
JOSEPH

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